

## **AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

### **LISTING OF CLAIMS**

1. (Currently Amended) A protective ground mat comprising:  
a non-rigid base;  
a plurality of hold-downs coupled to the base; and  
a plurality of tensioners, each tensioner having a first portion that is fixedly coupled to the non-rigid base and a second portion that may be selectively coupled to the first portion to adjust a distance between an associated pair of the hold-downs to thereby adjust a size, a shape or both the size and the shape of a perimeter of the non-rigid base.
2. (Original) The protective ground mat of Claim 1, wherein the base includes a pair of edges that cooperate to define a slit and wherein the protective ground mat further includes a closure device for selectively closing the slit.
3. (Original) The protective ground mat of Claim 2, wherein the closure device includes at least one of: a hook and loop fastener and a zipper.
4. (Original) The protective ground mat of Claim 2, wherein the slit extends from an outer edge of the base to a point outwardly of a center of the base.
5. (Original) The protective ground mat of Claim 4, wherein the slit terminates inwardly at a series of perforations.

6. (Original) The protective ground mat of Claim 5, wherein the series of perforations define a plurality of intersecting lines.

7. (Original) The protective ground mat of Claim 5, wherein the series of perforations define a plurality of shapes.

8. (Original) The protective ground mat of Claim 7, wherein each shape is disposed inside or abuts another one of the shapes.

9. (Currently Amended) The protective ground mat of Claim 2, wherein the ~~tensioners include~~ first portion includes a loop and the second portion includes a strap, ~~the loop being secured to the base,~~ the strap having a first end, which is secured to the base, and a second end that is disposed through the loop.

10. (Original) The protective ground mat of Claim 2, wherein an aperture is formed in the base and the slit intersects the aperture.

11. (Original) The protective ground mat of Claim 2, further comprising cutting indicia on the base.

12. (Original) The protective ground mat of Claim 11, wherein the cutting indicia defines a plurality of shapes.

13. (Original) The protective ground mat of Claim 12, wherein each shape is disposed inside or abuts another one of the shapes.

14. (Original) The protective ground mat of Claim 13, wherein the shapes are concentric with one another.

15. (Original) The protective ground mat of Claim 12, wherein each of the shapes is similar but differently sized.

16. (Currently Amended) A protective ground mat comprising:  
a non-rigid base, the base includes a pair of edges that cooperate to define a slit;  
a closure device for selectively closing the slit, the closure device including at least one of a hook and loop fastener and a zipper;

a plurality of hold-downs coupled to the base; and

a plurality of tensioners, each tensioner having a first portion that is fixedly coupled to the non-rigid base and a second portion that may be selectively coupled to the first portion to adjust a distance between an associated pair of the hold-downs to thereby selectively constrict the non-rigid base;

wherein a series of perforations are formed in the base and the slit terminates inwardly at a series of perforations.

17. (Original) A method of installing a protective ground mat to the ground, the protective ground mat having a non-rigid base, the method comprising:

securing the protective ground mat to the ground at a plurality of locations; and

tensioning the base after it has been secured to the ground so that it conforms to a contour of the ground.

18. (Original) The method of Claim 17, wherein prior to securing the protective ground mat to the ground, the method includes opening a slit in the base and fitting the base about an object.

19. (Original) The method of Claim 18, wherein the step of fitting the base about an object includes forming a hole in the base, the hole intersecting the slit.